

consolidation of an individual's plan benefits, for example, if a buyer's plan is involved in a merger or consolidation with the seller's plan or if the buyer's plan receives a transfer from the seller's plan, the buyer is not subject to requirements that would not apply if the buyer's plan had not accepted a transfer from the seller's plan.

The Secretary of the Treasury may also issue guidance under which a plan may provide the notice only 15 days before the effective date in cases in which a 45-day advance notice would be unduly burdensome either because the amendment is contingent on a merger, acquisition, disposition or other similar transaction or because 45-day advance notice would be impracticable (such as where benefits are being reduced as part of a liquidation or reorganization in bankruptcy or insolvency proceedings).

Sanctions: An excise tax applies to a failure to satisfy the notice requirements and, in the case of an egregious violation, the individual is entitled to the greater of the benefit under the amended plan or the plan before the amendment. Except in the case of a multiemployer plan, the tax is imposed on the employer. If a plan (other than a multiemployer plan) is sponsored by a party other than an employer, it is intended that the plan sponsor will be treated as the employer for this purpose. An egregious violation includes a situation in which there has been no intentional failure to provide notice, but the employer fails to take reasonable corrective steps after discovering that there was a failure to provide notice to some individuals.

Effective date exception where information provided within 120 days of enactment: The notice and information required under the Act is not required to be provided earlier than 120 days after the date of enactment of the Act. For example, if a large pension plan is amended to reduce benefits effective on the day after the enactment of the Act, the amendment could go into effect on the day after the enactment of the Act, but the plan could provide the required enhanced notice and related information (and also furnish any requested individual benefit statements) as late as 120 days after the date of enactment.

#### HONORING THE BROOKLYN CHINESE-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION'S EIGHTH AVENUE SENIOR CENTER ON ITS SIX YEARS OF SERVICE

**HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 7, 1999*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of the Brooklyn Chinese-American Association, and the sixth anniversary of its Eighth Avenue Senior Center.

For more than a decade, the Brooklyn Chinese-American Association has provided vital assistance to tens of thousands of the Chinese-American residents who constitute one of New York's fastest-growing communities. Six years ago, recognizing a critical need in this community, the Association opened the Eighth Avenue Senior Center, which provides daily congregate meals, citizenship classes,

medical check-ups and screenings, monthly birthday parties, field trips and many other services.

Operating out of modest facilities but with exceptional heart and dedication, the center has a membership of almost 2,000 and offers services to over 160 senior members daily.

The centerpiece of this year's sixth anniversary commemoration is the Millennial Roundtable Celebration. Fulfilling an extraordinary and touching ceremony, tables will be organized with seating for 12 seniors who are each at least 84 years of age—totaling 1,000 years. For the first time, to commemorate the end of the century and the turn of the millennium, a Double Millennial Roundtable will be featured, with seating for 23 seniors who are at least 87 years of age and totaling 2,000 years of age.

A poet wrote, "I like spring, but it is too young. I like summer, but it is too proud. So I like best of all autumn, because its tone is mellow, its colors are richer, and it is tinged with a little sorrow. Its golden richness speaks not of the innocence of spring, nor the power of summer, but of the mellowness and kindly wisdom of approaching age."

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me when I commend the Eighth Avenue Senior Center, and the Brooklyn Chinese-American Association, for its work to ensure golden richness in the lives of our seniors.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2990, QUALITY CARE FOR THE UNINSURED ACT OF 1999, AND H.R. 2723, BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS MANAGED CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

**HON. JAY INSLEE**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 6, 1999*

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rigged rule for debate on the patients' bill of rights. Ever since this session began, I have been working with my colleagues to bring 'bipartisan patients' bill of rights to the floor for a vote. But now that Republicans have been forced to allow a vote on the bipartisan consensus managed care bill, they have written a rule designed to kill the measure.

Instead of providing a fair and open rule considering the patients' bill of rights, the Republican Leadership has stacked the deck by writing a rule that blends the managed care bill with a measure riddled with special interest "poison pills" designed to kill the measure, and that denies us the opportunity to offset any potential revenue losses from the measure.

The Republican Leadership is combining the bipartisan managed care bill with a so-called insurance access bill, which is not paid for. In addition, the Republican leadership is denying a bipartisan group of members the right to offer an amendment to offset the cost of the bill and be fiscally responsible.

If we can defeat this flawed rule, bipartisan advocates of managed care reform will return with a fair and open rule that will permit enactment of managed care reform. My constituents deserve patients' bill of rights. I urge my colleagues to vote down this rule and to support

real managed care reform and bipartisan patients' bill of rights.

#### HONORING THE RAMSEY FIRE DEPARTMENT ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. MARGE ROUKEMA**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 7, 1999*

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Ramsey Fire Department on its 100th Anniversary. This volunteer unit is one of the finest in New Jersey and deserves the thanks and support of every resident of our community.

Volunteer firefighters are among the most dedicated public servants in our communities. They set aside their own convenience—indeed, their own safety—to protect the lives and property of their neighbors and ask nothing in return. Volunteer firefighters turn out to do their duty in the darkness of freezing winter nights and in the heat of suffocating summer days without hesitation.

The Ramsey Fire Department was established in 1899 with 32 original members. The new fire company made a \$25 deposit on their first fire engine, an 1885 Babcock Chemical Wagon purchased second-hand from the Rutherford Fire Department. The Dater family of Ramsey donated property near the railroad tracks for the first firehouse, built at a cost of \$197, and the Ramsey Fire Department was in business. The first alarm was a brush fire near the tracks in April and the first building fire followed in January 1900.

The department grew quickly during the early years of the century, soon adding a horse-drawn ladder wagon and going to motorized fire trucks in 1912. A modern pumper was added in 1927 and the Ladies Auxiliary was founded in 1935 with 23 charter members. Additional equipment was purchased in subsequent years and the Island Avenue fire station constructed in 1951 to accommodate the growing fleet. A substation in the form of a three-bay addition to the borough garage was added in the 1960s. The 1970s saw the formation of the Junior Fire Brigade to encourage young people to become involved and a conversion from the traditional "fire engine red" paint scheme on equipment to lime yellow.

The Ramsey Fire Department has twice received the Box 54 Unit Citation Award from the New Jersey-New York Volunteer Firemen's Association for daring rescues, once in 1975 and again in 1984. In 1981, the department found itself the victim of arson when fire destroyed the second floor of the Island Avenue building. The building was repaired and rededicated the next year.

Major renovations of the fire department headquarters on Island Avenue were completed in 1992, including a room to display antique fire apparatus, a new radio room, a chief officer's room, an office for administrative officers and a 150-foot radio communications tower. Since 1996, the headquarters building has been known as the Robert E. Litchult Fire Safety Building in honor of Litchult, who served a record 63 years with the department.

Responding to nationwide difficulties in recruiting volunteer firefighters, the department